

our naval nuclear deterrent, and cooperation with the US under its aegis remains vital. The ONR did informally offer to dispose of DREADNOUGHT at their land burial site, but we do not take the offer seriously, and the officer who made it has since retired.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

16. There are strong reasons for trying to persuade H Committee and the US Administration that dumping at sea should be adopted as the UK's method of disposing of decommissioned submarines. Sea-disposal is the safest option from an environmental point of view; it meets the legal and scientific requirements, and it is the cheapest method by a significant margin. But there remain significant political problems.

17. My inclination is that we should try to obtain the necessary agreement of the US Administration and H Committee with a view to disposing of DREADNOUGHT at sea in 1989. The likely Republican victory in the Presidential election gives us the chance to try to get the Americans to withdraw their objections once the election is out of the way. What I believe may help is for a small expert team to give the US Government a technical presentation on the merits of sea-disposal. This would have to be done at Ministerial level if we are to overcome the opposition from the ONR, and we should need to obtain the agreement of the FCO beforehand to the approach being made. After we had satisfied the Americans, we could then return to H Committee formally with our proposals. However, we need to have achieved all of this by 31 December, if we are to keep to the timetable of dumping DREADNOUGHT at sea on 1 July 1989. Our approach to the Administration must therefore be made as soon as possible after 8 November.

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